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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, Feb. 23, 1932.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Easier Kitchens." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,  
U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Convenient Kitchens."

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One of the legends of our town has to do with the Barnard family and their famous bread. The story goes that for years--yes, longer than that--for generations the women in that family made perfect bread at every baking--or, at least, the very best bread ever tasted by anyone in town. Of course, that bread was the envy of every other housewife far and near. But the secret of its success was known to only members of the Barnard family. Outsiders might guess, but none of them knew the recipe or the process that produced this famous bread. The secret gave the Barnards a standing in the community; Barnard women were proud and other women considered that they had a right to be.

But in time the family dwindled until only one last member was left in the old home. This was Miss Ann Barnard, the only person alive who knew the secret of Barnard bread. Family fortunes had dwindled, too, but Miss Ann kept up tradition and added a bit to her thin pocketbook by baking twice a week and selling loaves of her perfect bread. One winter day, however, Miss Ann became ill, and little Sally Brooks went up to the old house to look after her. As it happened, little Sally arrived on bread-making day and Miss Ann was too ill to look after this important job. There seemed nothing to do but to turn the baking over to Sally and reveal the long cherished family secret.

Poor Miss Ann, pale and trembling, gave Sally instructions about making the bread and then in a low whisper confided the secret. - the dough was kneaded three times during the night when it was rising. Sally was to set her alarm and get up at intervals during the night to knead the bread.

The next day there was the baking to do and in the late afternoon, the neighbors, filled with curiosity, came in to buy their loaves and see how Sally had succeeded. No baking of Barnard bread ever came out more successfully than Sally's. Miss Ann's temperature went down and she began to feel on the road to recovery as soon as she had a sample.



Mrs. MacDonald, the stingiest woman in town, actually bought two loaves and said she would be willing to pay more for them.

"What wouldn't I give if I knew the secret of that bread," she said to Sally. "You're a lucky girl to be in on it."

Sally smiled. When the visitors were all gone, she went up to see Miss Ann. Miss Ann was propped up in bed, plainly nervous.

"You're sure you didn't hint to anybody that you got up in the middle of the night to knead the bread?" she inquired.

Sally shook her head. She confessed, "As a matter of fact, I didn't get up. I slept straight through from ten to seven, and never woke once."

That's the story of the Barnard bread. I don't say it's true, but a lot of people in our town vouch for it. It's a good story anyway. I like it because it proves one of my pet theories--that many household jobs, cooking and other things, can often be done just as well by simpler and easier methods. A lot of us cling to old difficult ways of doing things because we got started doing them that way, because those were the methods used in our family. But I'm no believer in the longest way round, if you can reach the same place by a short cut. Simplify wherever you can, is my motto, whether I'm cooking, cleaning or doing the laundry.

Speaking of short cuts and easy ways of doing things, of course, you know that the arrangement of your kitchen has a lot to do with them. Many housewives actually walk miles while doing their kitchen work because the stove, sink and work table are far apart in their great big kitchens. That was the way especially with many old-fashioned kitchens.

But recently the housewives and the architects and the engineers and the home economics specialists got at it and began talking and planning convenient kitchens. So modern kitchens in general are better workshops and kitchen jobs can be done in less time, and with less effort.

When you come to analyze the work done in the kitchen, you'll notice that it can be divided into four types. First, there's the preparation of food. Second, there's cooking. Third, there's serving. And fourth, cleaning up. Of course, these jobs overlap each other somewhat-- for example, both cleaning up and preparation are done partly at the sink. But, in general, each type of work goes more easily if it has a space or center by itself. In some kitchens, you know, it takes a long time and a lot of patience to get a meal, even a very simple one, because there's no place to put things and because the utensils and supplies are way off somewhere else when you want them near. But in a comfortable, convenient kitchen, there is generous worktable space for preparing food.

And, more than that, supplies and utensils are kept near the center where they are going to be used. Take the work table, for example. You'll need there, mixing bowls, measuring cups, sifters, beaters, cutlery and so on. For convenience, you'll hang a lot of these articles up on hooks where you can reach them easily when you're working at the table. You know that it's easier to get at an egg beater or a measuring spoon or some other utensil



if it's hanging up in plain sight on its own hook than where it's in a drawer mixed with a lot of other utensils.

As for the supplies to be used at the table, well, most of the dry groceries like sugar and flour and baking powder should be kept in a cabinet or shelves above or beside the table. The perishable supplies--eggs, milk, fruits and vegetables, will be kept in the refrigerator. But they need to be near at hand, too. So the refrigerator should be placed near both the table and the sink.

Near the stove or cooking center-- more hooks will hold the utensils needed here--pots and pans and the lids to fit them.

I've said my say about lights in the kitchen before now, but it's time to do it again. Let the light so shine in your kitchen -- that no shadows fall on your work. Plenty of light to see what you're doing adds to comfort, ease in cooking, efficiency and all the other qualities we housewives are after. It's just plain common sense that dishes will be washed cleaner, potatoes will be peeled thinner, ingredients will be measured more accurately and so on, if the light is adequate. But one little electric bulb dangling on a cord from the center of the ceiling just won't give enough light for comfortable work. You need light, not shadows, on every work center-- stove, sink and table.

Let's see now. Didn't I promise you a recipe yesterday? Seems to me I remember something about directions for making good corn bread--or Johnny cake, as we used to call it in our family. So if you'll call your pencils to attention, I'll give you this recipe. And, of course, it'll be simple, straight-forward directions with no unnecessary labor in the entire process. Because corn bread makes such a good companion to fish, it's a favorite food during this season.

Yes, I'll make another promise. I promise to give the recipe slowly. Anybody who misses an item is entitled to give me a scolding by wire, mail or telephone.

Seven ingredients for corn bread:

2 cups of corn meal	2 teaspoons of salt
1/2 teaspoon of soda	2 cups of sour milk
2 teaspoons of baking powder	2 eggs, and
2 tablespoons of melted fat.	

Seven ingredients. Let's check them. (Repeat).

Making the bread is easy. First, you sift the dry ingredients and add the milk. Then you beat the eggs and add them. Finally you add the melted fat. Heat the pan you're going to bake in. Butter it well. Then pour the mixture in while the pan is still very hot. Bake from 40 to 50 minutes in a hot oven (400 to 425 degrees F.)

Tomorrow: "More About Walls and Pictures."

